## AMENDMENT OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 (Cancelled).

21.(New) Emergency hailing method for interrogating fitness of an at-risk user, comprising steps of:

equipping the at-risk user with a portable emergency hailer system including a base station and a preferably wearable hailing device;

sequencing the hailer system to establish an abeyant mode first time interval and an active mode second time interval;

sensibly cuing the at-risk user upon the onset of the active mode to respond by promptly submitting a manual acknowledgment;

determining a timely submission of the manual acknowledgment during the second time interval as indicative of acceptable at-risk user's fitness and thereupon return the emergency hailer system to the abeyant mode;

ascertaining a response time delay which occurs between the sensible cuing of the at-risk user and the timely submission of the manual acknowledgment of the cuing event;,

reducing duration of the first time interval relative with an increase in the response time delay;

increasing the duration of the first time interval relative with a decrease in the response time delay;

whereby an increase in the response time delay results in a more frequently recurring fitness interrogation and conversely a decrease in the response time delay results in a less

frequently recurring fitness interrogation; and,

resolving a failure to submit the manual acknowledgment during the active mode time interval as indicative of the at-risk user's fitness being presently unknown and consequentially effectuate an emergency signal state.

22.(New) The emergency hailer method of claim 21 comprising further steps of:

adjusting duration of the active mode second time interval relative with the ascertained response time delay, including:

reducing duration of the second time interval relative with a decrease in the response time delay;

increasing the duration of the second time interval relative with an increase in the response time delay;

whereby an increase in the response time delay results in extending duration of the active mode second time interval and conversely a decrease in the response time delay results in a shortening of the active mode second time interval, thereby automatically adjusting the second time interval to tolerate variation in the at-risk user's quickness of response.

23.(New) The emergency hailer method of claim 21 comprising further steps of:

adjusting duration of the active mode second time interval relative with the ascertained response time delay, including:

reducing duration of the second time interval proportional to an increase in the response time delay;

increasing the duration of the second time interval proportional to a decrease in the response time delay;

whereby a decrease in the response time delay results in extending duration of the active mode second time interval and conversely an increase in the response time delay results in a shortening of the active mode second time interval, thereby automatically adjusting the second time interval to tolerate variation in the at-risk user's quickness of response.

24. (New) The emergency hailer method of claim 21 comprising a further step of:

serving a plurality of the at-risk users to include a first client user and at least a second client user;

first configuring a first wearable hailing device including the provision for submitting the manual acknowledgment, and optionally, to be physically worn as a first vigilant appurtenance by the first client user;

first initiating a first encoded alert signal in response to a lacking or behindhand submission of the manual acknowledgment of the first cue by the first client user;

first sending the first encoded alert signal to a local base station sited in association with the plurality of at-risk users;

a second cuing of a second client user to promptly submit the

manùal acknowledgment of the second cuing event;

second configuring a second wearable hailing device including the provision for submitting the manual acknowledgment, and optionally, to be physically worn as a second vigilant appurtenance by the second client user;

second initiating a second encoded alert signal in response to the lacking or the behindhand occurrence of the manual acknowledgment of the second cue by the second client user;

second transmitting the second encoded alert signal to the local base station sited in association with the plurality of at-risk users; and,

configuring the local base station to receive at least one of the first encoded alert signal and the second encoded alert signal and respond by at least one of producing an alarm signal and sending a first emergency signal.

whereby, the alert signal encoding enables a single local base station to be uniquely responsive to each one of a plurality of at-risk users ordinarily sharing an inhabitancy.

25. (New) The emergency hailer method of claim 21 comprising further steps of:

sending a periodically recurrent wireless check signal from the wearable hailing device to the local base station;

determining an absence of reception of the wireless check signal by the local base station for a period of time exceeding a predetermined limit and producing an interruption state

signal;

optionally configuring the local base station to emanate at least one of activating a local telltale signal and produce a fault-indicative emergency signal state in response to the interruption state signal.

26. (New) The emergency hailer method of claim 21 comprising further steps of:

configuring the local base station to respond to the emergency state signal and automatically dial at least one care-provider's emergency telephone number; and,

sending a predetermined emergency message signal to the care-provider who may answer the emergency telephone number.

27. (New) The emergency hailer method of claim 21 comprising further steps of:

configuring the local base station to respond to the emergency state signal and automatically dial at least one care-provider's emergency telephone number;

sending a predetermined emergency message signal to the care-provider who may answer the emergency telephone number;

confirming receipt of the predetermined emergency message signal by at least one of a first dialed primary care-provider and a subsequently dialed first backup care-provider;

urging the primary care-provider who may answer the dialed emergency telephone number to acknowledge receipt by

returning a responsion signal ordinarily initiated by pressing a predetermined dial keypad button; and,

alternatively dialing a backup care-provider's emergency telephone number in absence of a timely return of the responsion signal by a previously dialed primary care-provider.

28. (New) The emergency hailer method of claim 21 comprising further steps of:

reversing of consequential relationship between the ascertained response time delay and the first time interval, including:

reducing duration of the first time interval relative with a decrease in the response time delay;

increasing the duration of the first time interval relative with an increase in the response time delay;

whereby a decrease in the response time delay results in a more frequently recurring fitness interrogation and conversely an increase in the response time delay results in a less frequently recurring fitness interrogation; and,

*(Independent Claim)*

29. (New) Emergency hailing method for confirming a probable state of well-being of an at-risk user, comprising steps of:

equipping the at-risk user with a wireless interrogative system comprising a base station and a portable hailing device;

sequencing the interrogative system with an ordered pattern of abeyant modes and active modes;

maintaining the abeyant mode for a first timed interval;

setting the personal transponder to the active mode upon time-out of a first timed interval;

sensibly cuing the at-risk user and initiating a second timing interval upon onset of the active mode;

urging the at-risk user to manually acknowledge the sensible cue by actuating a responsion switch preferably included in the portable hailing device;

resetting the abeyant mode and the first timing interval in response to the manual acknowledgment being timely occurrent during the second timed interval;

measuring duration of a response time lapse between onset of the active mode and the manual acknowledgment;

changing the first timing interval relative with a change in the measured duration of the response time lapse; and,

evoking an emergency state signal upon finding a lacking of manual acknowledgment during the second timing interval.

30. (New) The emergency hailing method of claim 29 comprising a further steps of changing the second timing interval relative with finding a change in the measured duration of the response time lapse.

31. (New) The emergency hailing method of claim 29 wherein the changing of the first timing interval further includes the steps of:

decreasing the first timing interval relative with an increase in the measured duration of the response time lapse; and,

conversely increasing the first timing interval relative with a decrease in the measured duration of the response time lapse.

32. (New) The emergency hailing method of claim 29 wherein the base station comprises:

periodically sending an interrogation signal to the portable hailing device upon time-out of the first timing interval;

cuing the at-risk user to manually actuate the responsion switch and promptly send a reply signal to the base station preferably prior to elapse of the second timing interval;

processing timeliness of the reply signal returned to the base station;

first finding the reply signal to be timely returned during the second timing interval and reinitiating the abeyant mode and the first timing interval;

second finding the reply signal to remain silent during the second timing interval and to subsequently said evoke the emergency state signal promptly upon time-out of the second timing

interval.

33. (New) The emergency hailing method of claim 29 comprising a further step of inhibiting the evocation of the emergency state signal and preferably alerting the at-risk user whenever the base station and portable hailing device are mutually out-of-range of one-another.

34. (New) The emergency hailing method of claim 31 comprising further steps of:

sending a wireless ranging signal between the base station and the portable hailing device;

receiving the wireless ranging signal while the base station and the portable hailing device are within working range of one-another;

determining a loss of the wireless ranging signal reception and therefrom establishing the mutual out-of-range state.

35. (New) The emergency hailing method of claim 29 comprising further steps of:

auto-dialing a first care-provider's emergency telephone number in an immediate response to the emergency state signal;

signaling the evocation of the emergency state signal to the first care-provider.

36. (New) The emergency hailing method of claim 29 comprising further steps of:

auto-dialing a first care-provider's emergency telephone number in an immediate response to the emergency state signal;

signaling the evocation of the emergency state signal to the first care-provider.

urging the first care-provider to acknowledge notification by manually submitting a responsion signal by promptly pressing at least one predesignated Touchtone™ keypad button; and otherwise,

finding the responsion signal lacking and subsequently auto-dialing an alternate care-provider's emergency telephone number.

*(Independent Claim)*

37. (New) Emergency hailing apparatus including a portable base station and preferably portable hailing device immediately associated with an at-risk user, comprising:

abeyant mode control means operative for a first time interval;

active mode control means enabled upon timeout of the first timed abeyant mode and maintained operative for a second time interval;

manual response means integrated into the portable hailing device;

sensible cuing means enabled by an onset of the active mode for prompting the at-risk user to timely actuate the manual response means during the second time interval;

system control means for resetting the abeyant mode control means upon finding the timely actuation of the manual response means and to evoke an emergency state signal upon the finding of a lacking of the timely actuation;

assessment means for measuring response time lapse between the onset of the active mode and the timely actuation of the manual response means;

adjustor means for changing duration of the first time interval relative with the measured response time lapse;

whereby, a failure by the at-risk user to promptly respond to a sensible cue may be interpreted as a probable cause for concern regarding the at-risk user's medical or physical well-being and as a sufficient reason for the evocation of

the emergency state signal.

38. (New) The emergency hailing apparatus of claim 37 further comprising:

a range determination means comprising at least one of:

a first sending means for submitting a periodically recurrent wireless ranging signal originating from the base station and received by the portable hailing device;

a second sending means for translating a periodically recurrent wireless ranging signal originating from the portable hailing device and received by the base station;

a range verification means operating in conjunction with the range determination means to maintain the emergency hailing apparatus in the abeyant mode when the reception of the wireless ranging signal fails to occur.

39. (New) The emergency hailing apparatus of claim 37 further comprising:

the adjustor means functions to decrease the first time interval in response to an increase in the measured response time and conversely to increase the first time interval in response to a decrease in the measured response time;

whereby a slow-down by the at-risk user in manually responding to the sensible cue produces an increase in frequency of interrogation and otherwise a quicker response may produce a less frequent interrogation.

40. (New) The portable emergency hailing apparatus of claim 37 further comprising:

auto-dialing means responsive to the emergency state signal and configured to automatically dial at least one predetermined care-provider's telephone number; and,

messaging means effective to impart an emergency message to a care-provider answering the automatically dialed said telephone number;

wherein the messaging means and auto-dialing means may further include:

riposte determinator means recognizing a reciprocative key signal submitted by the answering care-provider in response to a protocol instruction; and otherwise,

reenabling the auto-dialing means to effectively dial another care-provider's telephone number when the presently called care-provider does not enter the distinctive key signal in accord with the protocol instructions;

whereby, failure to enter the distinctive key signal indicates that the called party is not available and an alternate party is called.

*[end of claim amendments]*